2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

system, although the actual excavation and sinking of wells is done by negro slave labour.

The plantations at Djaidh are the largest and cover several hundred acres; the trees are exceptionally fine and tall, and the yield of dates is above average. The water used for their irrigation is drawn from deep natural wells at the foothills of Jebel Faiyah, a dozen miles away, and passes along subterranean channels by gravity flow. All along this route wells have been dug to meet this channel, in order to keep it clear of obstructions, since the walls frequently cave in and the channel becomes blocked with sand and boulders from the river bed. The depth of the channel varies from twenty to fifty feet; it is built on the Persian principle of irrigation and is said to be several hundred years old. Labourers work inside the channel, which is about twenty feet in circumference, shovelling out the loose sand and debris; this is piled into baskets, which are raised to the surface by means of a primitive pulley, which rests on a crude trestle of tree-boughs. Four labourers are employed at each well, two underground and two at the surface.

The work had not been progressing satisfactorily this year and complaints had been made to the Political Officer that the channel was congested and that an insufficient flow of water was reaching the plantations. This was a matter of some concern to the authorities, since, if the plantations were deprived of water there would be a danger of the trees dying, or at least of the fruit withering on the stems. If this occurred, thousands of Arabs would be unemployed in the autumn (the date-picking season), and the price of dates would rise out of all proportion to local incomes, as they would have to be imported from Muscat or Basrah. A great many of the inland tribes derive their livelihood from the seasonal crops, and they are well paid for picking and packing the dates.

We set off shortly after breakfast, in two four-wheel-drive trucks, the party consisting of Captain Tandy, Mr. T. F. Williamson, geologist to the Basrah Petroleum Company, Mr. Jasim bin Muhammed Kadhawi (Residency Agent at Sharjah), myself, and Sheikh Hamid bin Abdulla, a nephew of the Regent of Kalba, who has a dependency or settlement near Djaidh, the tribesmen of which maintain the wells. Owing to the grass-covered dunes and shifting sands of the direct camel route, we took the coastal road through Ajman and Hera as far as Umm-al-Quwain, a distance of thirty miles. Skirting Umm-al-Quwain, which is a small